

REMARKS

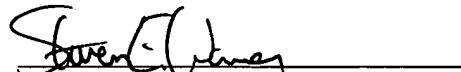
Applicant requests favorable consideration and allowance of the subject application in view of the preceding amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 45-52 and 77-121 are presented for consideration. Claims 45, 77, 95 and 105 are independent. Claims 105-121 have been added to recite additional features of the subject invention. Support for these claims can be found in the application as originally filed, for example, with respect to Figure 5 and the accompanying discussion in the subject specification. Therefore, no new matter has been added.

Claims 45-52 were previously allowed in this application and should be deemed allowable at the outset. In addition to these claims being allowable, Applicant submits that claims 77-104 patentably define features of the optical apparatus, the device manufacturing method, and the contamination preventing method of the present invention and that claims 105-121 patentably define features of the exposure apparatus and the device manufacturing method of the present invention. Therefore, Applicant further submits that the instant application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and an early Notice of Allowance are requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



Attorney for Applicant

Steven E. Warner

Registration No. 33,326

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-3801
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200
SEW/eab

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